

TESTIMONY

Hello, my name is Rich Dumas, a 45 year old man living with HIV/AIDS in Northwest Connecticut. I am concerned about the proposed cuts in the Department of Social Service's budget to the Connecticut AIDS Drugs Assistance Program or CADAP as it is more commonly known. As a person living with HIV/AIDS I know how important and life-saving this program can be. In the summer of 2008, I was diagnosed with advanced AIDS and was very ill. I almost died. The HIV/AIDS medications saved my life. I could not afford to pay for these costly but lifesaving medications myself. I was able to access these lifesaving medications immediately because of the CADAP Program. These medications literally saved my life. I understand that we are in financially challenging times and that we all must sacrifice. However, I strongly urge you to hold the line on further cuts to the Connecticut AIDS Drugs Assistance Program. For many persons, the assistance provided by CADAP is a matter of life and death. While we appreciate what the Department of Social Services has done in the past to provide access to quality services and supports to persons living with HIV/AIDS in Connecticut, it is important that the Department continue its past commitment to persons living with HIV/AIDS as we face a challenging economic climate. As you make the difficult decisions that are necessary to bring Connecticut's fiscal house in order, please do not forget the real human faces of those who will be affected by your decisions.

Thank you for your time.

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